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Via e-mail

Councillor Chris Barnham
Cabinet Member for School Performance and Children's Services
Lewisham Council
1 Catford Road
Catford
SE6 4RU

21st May 2020

Clarification on the re-opening of Lewisham Schools

Dear Councillor Barnham,

I hope this letter finds you well.

May I begin by praising the council's staff, especially at nurseries and schools during these unprecedented times. Teachers and Teaching Assistance have been vital in providing the support other key workers, such as NHS workers, need during these challenging and unprecedented times.

I am writing in relation to your tweet on the 20th May 2020, in which you told parents "no-one should assume their child will be in school on 1 June". A statement repeated in your letter to local head teachers. I note in that letter you also state that individual schools will determine themselves when they re-open.

Schools, of course, must only re-open when safe to do so in order to ensure that we continue to bring this virus under control. However, as the Cabinet Member responsible for local Schools Performances and Children's services, please can you therefore provide further clarification for local parents:

1. What role will Lewisham Council play in the decision to re-open individual schools across the borough?
2. What indicators will the council be using to access if a school should be encouraged to re-open?
3. Will the advice on whether an individual school should re-open be published so parents can see it?
4. What action is the council taking to monitor the work schools are setting for children during the lockdown to ensure the impact to children's education is a minimal as possible?

5. What is the council doing to prevent students from falling behind educationally during this challenging period?
6. What action is the council taking to ensure SEN pupils are not being left behind during this period?

I am sure you will agree with me that neither the Government or schools will be sending children or staff back to schools until they are satisfied it is safe to do so. However there does need to be more clarity on what is being done to ensure no child is left behind.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Helena Croft', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Helena Croft
Conservative Spokesman for Sydenham ward